

January 17, 2022

County Council Members,

This message is to submit that I strongly oppose the Board of Health Regulation - Vaccination Requirements to Enter Bars, Restaurants, Recreation Centers, and Other Covered Establishments. The last 45 days in Montgomery County, and the world, unquestionably demonstrate vaccines and boosters do not stop the spread of COVID-19. We are 85% vaccinated in this county, yet COVID spread like wildfire here. This happened throughout the country and the world, regardless of vaccination rates in communities. Yet, this Regulation seems to be based on an erroneous predication that vaccines stop the spread of COVID. New York City's vaccine passport system did nothing to slow the explosive spread of COVID there, despite its 80% vaccination rate. Given the undisputed fact that vaccines do not stop the spread of COVID, I wonder to what end is this Regulation designed for? The data now suggests that a vaccinated person is no less likely to contract or spread COVID in a covered establishment than an unvaccinated person. Is the Regulation being considered to protect the unvaccinated, who are more likely to experience severe COVID-related illness, from potentially contracting COVID in covered establishments? With vaccines widely available at no cost, why would the County care to institute this drastic measure to protect the very few county residents who choose not to vaccinate? It does not make sense. This Regulation is underhanded and authoritarian.

Moving forward with this Regulation will not only divide the citizens of this county, but it will harm businesses. Those who will not vaccinate themselves or their children based on their own assessment of their risk to COVID will go elsewhere to spend their dollars. Businesses will lose revenue from out-of-town visitors, or residents who simply forgot their vaccination proof. Moreover, it will require businesses to confront patrons, leading to uncomfortable situations resulting from a directive they don't even support. When this Regulation was conceived, perhaps these harms were thought of as collateral damage to a critical and fact-based measure to stop the spread of COVID. But now that we know the vaccines and boosters do not stop the spread of COVID, imposing these harms on the citizens and businesses of this county is completely irrational. How can you deny a child entry to an establishment when the scientific and real-world evidence shows that vaccinated and unvaccinated children can spread COVID just the same? It is simply cruel to place children in that situation given the reality of what vaccines actually do.

I understand you are all under immense pressure to demonstrate you are doing everything you can to control COVID. Please understand that there are many thousands of citizens in this county who accept the reality of the world we now live-in. COVID is endemic. No government official can stop the spread of a highly contagious air-borne novel virus that is spreading rapidly throughout the world. Please do not pass this Regulation simply to placate those who irrationally cling to the notion that you have any power to stop COVID or that the vaccines are impenetrable barriers that will bring us to zero COVID. You do not have that power. The vaccines clearly will not stop the spread of COVID. I accept this reality and do not fault you for the daily

COVID numbers. The number of citizens who accept the new reality grows daily and will support you when you reject this irrational Regulation. Moving forward with this Regulation in the face of irrefutable real-world evidence that it will not stop the spread of COVID will undermine your own authority, and generate substantial and forceful opposition when it doesn't work. Should you pass this divisive Regulation, you will place yourselves squarely on the wrong side of history and do irreversible damage to this county.

Sincerely,
Michael Kearns
Chevy Chase, MD